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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 003615

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TAGS: PREL PGOV MASS MARR PL

SUBJECT: POLISH PRIME MINISTER CANDIDATE EMPHASIZES DESIRE FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH U.S.

Classified By: Ambassador Victor Ashe, for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶11. (C) Summary: Ambassador met for about 30 minutes October 14 with Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, Law and Justice's (PiS) candidate for prime minister. Marcinkiewicz emphasized the importance PiS and its coalition partner Civic Platform (PO) attached to the U.S. relationship, raised offsets and military modernization as top issues, and deferred discussion of Iraq until after formation of the government. He described the "two pillars" of Polish foreign policy as good relations with the U.S. and a strong role for Poland in the EU, and said Poland must try to have good relations with Russia, even while actively promoting democracy in the region. Marcinkiewicz said that, despite the heated campaign, the negotiations between PiS and PO on government formation are going ahead smoothly, but gave no specifics on the make-up of the government. End Summary.

¶12. (C) Ambassador opened by reiterating President Bush's suggestion to Polish President Kwasniewski that the incoming Polish foreign minister and defense minister visit Washington as soon as possible after the new government is installed, which Marcinkiewicz agreed was a good idea. Ambassador emphasized that the U.S.-Polish relationship is a strategic partnership, and assured Marcinkiewicz that President Bush values Poland's input on regional issues. Marcinkiewicz described the two urgent tasks consuming him at the moment. First, he said he "must" participate in the presidential campaign of his party leader, Lech Kaczynski (reftel). Second, he continues to work with coalition partner (and presidential campaign rival party) PO to form a government as soon as possible after the October 23 second round of the presidential election. He said that, despite the heated campaign, there is "goodwill" on both sides and he fully expected the government to be formed and in place by the end of October.

¶13. (C) Marcinkiewicz noted that both PiS and PO have made good relations with the U.S. a cornerstone of their foreign policy, and said that he had asked his "good friend," Radek Sikorski to pass this message to Washington officials. Marcinkiewicz said that key issues in the U.S.-Polish relationship for the new government would be, first, putting the F-16 Lockheed-Martin offset program "on a faster and more modern track," and second, continuing the modernization of Polish armed forces. When Ambassador replied that he thought the offset program was in much better shape than a year ago, and that the program was doing well, Marcinkiewicz responded that it was "going in the right direction," but could be even better. Regarding modernization, Marcinkiewicz said much had been accomplished, including the creation of a special forces unit and a rapid reaction force, but there was still a way to go. Marcinkiewicz said that Afghanistan and "other issues" could be discussed after the government was in place.

¶14. (C) Ambassador said we look forward to working with the new Minister of Defense on modernization and other issues, and told Marcinkiewicz that he wanted only to say that good friends and good allies need to discuss differences privately and not read about important decisions in the press. We recognize that with a new government there will be changes, and we are ready to work on changes beneficial to both. The Pentagon wants to assist Poland's modernization efforts. Poland's F-16's will be ready for delivery in a year, and much is being done to prepare for that. Marcinkiewicz said he looked forward to early visits to Washington by the Defense and Foreign Ministers, in order to discuss future cooperation, but made no further comment on modernization, Iraq, or military assistance levels.

¶15. (C) Marcinkiewicz said he wanted Poland to be not only a strong partner of the U.S. but also an active member of the EU, calling the U.S. and EU relationships the two "pillars" of Polish foreign policy. PiS-PO hopes that Poland will be able to work with Germany's new government to make the EU more pro-Atlantic. Poland also, he said, needs to maintain good relations with Russia, but in order to build better ties, Poland needs to diversify its energy sources. Cooperation cannot, he said, be good as long as Poland is so dependent on Russia. Belarus and Ukraine will also continue to be areas of concern. Poland's interest in Belarus, he said, is a result not just of its concern about the Polish minority, but about human rights in general. Ambassador responded that President Bush has tried to convince Russian President Putin that having democratic neighbors along its

borders is not a threat, but he did not think Putin was convinced.

16. (C) Ambassador also thanked Marcinkiewicz for his personal involvement as chair of the Sejm's Finance Committee, in the effort to pass a personal property restitution act to resolve outstanding World War II claims. He thanked him in particular for the hours he spent meeting with American Jewish groups to hear their concerns. Marcinkiewicz said he regretted very much that the bill had not passed, but made no comment on its prognosis for the coming year.

17. (C) Comment: Marcinkiewicz avoided difficult subjects, including expectations of increased military assistance in return for continued presence in Iraq, or other matters. In a lunch with DCM the previous day, Marcinkiewicz's foreign policy advisor, Marek Jurek, was similarly optimistic about the progress of negotiations on government formation, but similarly close-mouthed on the potential make-up of the new government. That government formation talks continue despite the nastiness of the presidential campaign is a good sign, and we are confident there will be a government in place, as Marcinkiewicz predicts, by the end of the month. End Comment.
ASHE